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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the results of a survey of institutions of higher education which offer coursework focusing on Japanese Americans and emphasizes the program in Japanese American Studies at San Francisco State University. The results showed a distribution of twenty-eight courses offered at fifteen institutions in California, Washington and Hawaii, with the greatest number of courses being offered at San Francisco State University. A review of course content showed that thirteen are survey courses on the Japanese American experience; seven are about the American concentration camps set up during World War II; and six are on Japanese American culture. The paper stresses the importance of a balanced curriculum including courses in Japanese American history, community, social sciences and culture. (JCD)

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JAPANESE AMERICAN STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By

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JAPANESE AMERICAN STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION *

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A while back, I was looking through a directory of ethnic studies and bilingual, multi-cultural education programs in the US. In flipping through the contents, I came across a listing of institutions of higher education offering coursework focusing on Japanese Americans. As a professor of Japanese American studies at San Francisco State University, I was curious to find out about other Japanese American classes at colleges and universities throughout the country. I was impressed to discover in the listing that forty other IHEs in 16 different states also offered courses on Japanese Americans. My immediate reaction was one of pride that the pedagogical study of Japanese Americans was institutionalized at so many IHEs. However, in exploring further, I soon became skeptical at the data upon discovering that the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle offered 15 classes on Japanese Americans and the University of California, Irvine, located in ultra-conservative Orange county, listed ten. Moreover, I was a bit dismayed as I had assumed that San Francisco State offered the largest number of courses on the Japanese American experience.

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The directory in question is the result of a survey of IHEs conducted during the 1977-78 academic year funded by the US Office of Education's Ethnic Heritage Studies Program. The goal of the project was to develop a comprehensive listing of programs and personnel in the field of ethnic studies, multicultural teacher training and bilingual education.

Procedurally, the project directed by David Washburn sent an initial letter of inquiry to the academic affairs deans of 3,038 IHEs. Of the 2,536 responses, 526 ethnic studies programs were identified. Initial and up to five follow-up questionaires were then sent to program administrators with responses from 439 programs representing an 84% return. Informational item number 8 on the questionaire asked for the respondent to list the number of courses offered focusing on the United States experience of specific ethnic groups. Fifty-seven ethnic classifications were listed among which Japanese American was one.

The resulting data revealed that 41 IHEs offered an aggregate of 100 courses on Japanese Americans ranging from a high of 15 at the University of Illinois to one course at 24 of the institutions. In investigating the results, I examined the program offerings listed in each of the college's catalogues. I could only find 24 courses at 11 of the colleges which focused on the Japanese American experience, an alarming discrepancy of 76 courses and 30 institutions. I will now explain the discrepancy between the findings reported in Washburn's directory and my own investigation.

PROBLEM OF QUESTIONAIRE DESIGN

I assert that the reliability of the data in the directory was biased by the subjective reporting of program administrators. The responses depended on the individual interpretation of the phrase "focusing on the United States experience of" in this case Japanese Americans. Now, I interpret the wording to mean only those courses specifically concentrating on Japanese Americans as the central subject matter of the course. Administrators of programs with courses on Japanese Americans had no difficulty with the phrase. However, some respondents with classes focusing on Asian Americans but not just specifically on Japanese Americans mistakenly counted these courses under the Japanese American classification eventhough Asian American was another category on the list. Moreover, those institutions offering Asian Studies or multicultural studies erroneously included courses on Asia, Japan or general multi-ethnic or minority groups under the Japanese American classification.

The fact that 3/4 of the listings under Japanese Americans turned out to be incorrect raises questions both of the survey and of the awareness of the respondents. It is possible that the wording of the question may have been confusing, but it is more probable that program administrators lacked the requisite knowledge and sensitivity to respond correctly. Moreover, it appears that a number of institutions outside of the West Coast where the majority of Japanese Americans are concentrated interpreted Japanese American to refer to US-Japan relations reflecting an ignorance that is most saddening and disturbing.

Thus, although self-identification surveys of this sort inherently produce suspect data, the Japanese American results were so way off that those of us involved in Asian American Studies programs must fervently continue to educate our non-Asian American colleagues.

JAPANESE AMERICAN STUDIES AT IHEs

I used the data from the Washburn directory and supplemented it with my own investigation to come up with a grand total of 28 Japanese American courses at 15 IHEs (Figure A). An examination of these fifteen institutions reveals that they are all located within three states: California with 12, followed by 2 in Washington and 1 in Hawaii. Moreover, it is not coincidental that these three states represent the largest concentration of Japanese Americans in the country. As a further note, four of the institutions are community colleges while 9 are public and 2 private four-year IHEs.

An examination of the 28 courses shows that 13 are survey courses on the Japanese American experience; 7 are on the World War II American concentration camps; 6 are on Japanese American culture. Lastly, the results showed that San Francisco State, indeed, offered the largest number of courses, ten, followed by the University of California, Berkeley with 4 and San Jose State with 2. Now, I will explain why the Asian American Studies program at San Francisco State accounts for over one-third of the courses on Japanese Americans. (Figure B)

JAPANESE AMERICAN STUDIES AT SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

Most Asian American Studies programs offer coursework

emphasizing a pan-Asian American focus; however the term "Asian American" is a political, umbrella-type of expression within which we have many nationalities with distinct heritages and cultures. Thus, Asian American Studies at San Francisco State began and continues with this premise of distinctness and approaches the study of Japanese Americans as a discipline.

The Japanese American area of the department began in the Spring of 1969 with curriculum planning and the implementation of four courses in the Fall semester of 1969. The course offerings have ranged from 4 to 7 classes per semester. The discipline of Japanese American studies has been institutionalized at the university as a core within a liberal studies major and an interdisciplinary social science major. Also the institution offers a bilingual cross-cultural specialist credential in the Japanese language which requires an ethnic heritage and culture core of 18 units on Japanese Americans. Finally commencing this Fall semester, we are implementing a minor degree program in Asian American Studies with an emphasis of 21 out of 24 units on Japanese Americans.

Born out of the third world strike in the late 60's, the Asian American Stuides program at San Francisco State heads into the 80's with the first tenure-track appointment in the Japanese American area of any IHE in the country, an appointment which will probably not be duplicated at any other IHE since other colleges lack an extensive program of coursework on Japanese Americans.

Yet, although we have become more institutionalized on

campus, we still adhere to our original philosophy which is directed at Japanese American students through our coursework to: become knowledgeable and aware of their Japanese American experience; understand their ethnic identity; become sensitive to current issues and problems facing the Japanese American community; and to explore their cultural heritage. Moreover, we encourage non-Japanese Americans to take our classes to help dispell misconceptions and to further the notion of cultural pluralism.

I should add that all of our courses satisfy general education requirements for graduation, and as was pointed out in the director's roundtable yesterday morning, commencing Fall '81, all entering and transfer students at San Francisco State will be required to take at least 3 units of ethnic studies as a graduation requirement. This mandatory ethnic requirement will ensure the survival of ethnic studies and institutionally recognizes the cultural diversity of our society. Our campus is currently 20% Asian American and approximately 40% minority.

In Japanese American studies, we continue to place a dual emphasis on developing our credibility on campus as well as in the Japanese American community. In the past, we have organized projects related to coursework on topics and issues of importance to Japanese Americans. Thus, projects such as exhibits, forums and syposiums are held in the Japanese American community to afford wide exposure and attendance.

Of course many changes have occured from when we began in 1969 to the present where we are beginning our second decade of our program. Most notably, our students have changed. In the

late 60's, students in the studies were eager to work in the community. Now, we find our students are much more practical and perhaps more self-oriented. Many are majoring in business. Yet, we still find an interest among students in learning about themselves and their heritage. At the same time the Japanese American community has changed. Redevelopment has altered the physical character of the area with an emphasis on tourism, and the grass-roots community organizations started by Japanese American students at San Francisco State have become established community institutions.

In conclusion, the major priority of our program is to offer a balanced curriculum of courses on Japanese American history, community, social sciences and culture. Each semester we choose six classes to offer from amongst our current total of 21 course offerings in continuing our belief in the legitimacy of the interdisciplinary study of Japanese Americans as an academic discipline. Being the only such program around makes us unique, but providing the in-depth examination of the Japanese American experience ensures our leadership in the field of Asian American Studies.

FIGURE A

COURSES ON JAPANESE AMERICANS AT IHEs

INSTITUTION		# COURSES SELF-REPORT*	ACTUAL	DIFF.
ALASKA:	Alaska Meth. Univ.	1	0	-1
CALIF:	Cal State Univ.-Fresno	1	1	0
	San Francisco State Univ.	10	10	0
	San Jose State University	2	2	0
	College of San Mateo	1	1	0
	De Anza College	1	1	0
	Grossmont College	2	0	-2
	Long Beach City College	1	0	-1
	Monterey Penn. College	-	1	+1
	Pacific School of Religion	2	0	-2
	Univ. of California-Berkeley	4	4	0
	University of California-Irvine	10	0	-10
	Univ. of Calif.-Los Angeles	2	0	-2
	University of San Francisco	1	1	0
	University of So. California	2	1	-1
COLO:	El Paso Community College	1	0	-1
CONN:	Wesleyan University	6	0	-6
HAWAII:	Honolulu Community College	1	0	-1
	Kauai Community College	1	0	-1
	Windward Community College	1	0	-1
ILL:	George Williams College	1	0	-1
	Mundelein College	7	0	-7
	Univ. of Illinois-Chicago Circle	15	0	-15
KAN:	Wichit. State University	1	0	-1
MINN:	Bemidji State University	2	0	-2
MISS:	Jackson State University	1	0	-1
NEV:	Univ. of Nevada-Las Vegas	2	0	-2
NY:	CUNY-City College	5	0	-5
N. CARO:	Univ. of North Carolina-Charlotte	2	0	-2
OKLA:	East Central State University	1	0	-1
PENN:	Edinboro State College	1	0	-1
	Penn. State Univ.-Capitol Campus	1	0	-1
	Temple University	1	0	-1
WASH:	Big Bend Community College	1	0	-1
	Fort Steilacoom Community College	1	1	0
	South Seattle Community College	1	0	-1
	University of Washington	1	1	0
	Everett Community College	1	0	-1
	Western Washington State Univ.	3	0	-3
WISC:	Univ. of Wisconsin-La Crosse	1	0	-1
	Univ. of Wisconsin-Stevens Point	1	0	-1
	SUB TOTAL	100	24	-76
ADDITIONS:				
CALIF:	Cal State Univ.-Long Beach		1	
	Cal State Univ.-Sacramento		1	
	Humboldt State University		1	
HAWAII:	University of Hawaii		1	
TOTAL IHE COURSES ON JAPANESE AMERICANS			28	

*from Washburn, David E. Ethnic Studies, Bilingual/Bicultural Education & Multicultural Teacher Education in the United States. Miami, Inquiry International, 1979.

FIGURE B

COURSE TITLES ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

CALIFORNIA:

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-FRESNO

AS AM 30 The Japanese American (3) Historical survey of social adaptations and cultural changes in Japanese-Americans.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-LONG BEACH

AAS 430 Japanese Americans and World War II (3) Background to and impact of evacuation and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-SACRAMENTO

ES 116 A-B Language and Culture of the Japanese in America (4) Designed to expose the students in Japanese to practical use of Japanese in the Japanese community in and around Sacramento.

COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO

ES 450 Japanese American Relocation Camps (3) Introduction to the Japanese-American internment experience during World War II.

DE ANZA COLLEGE

AAS 28 The Japanese in the United States (4) A critical analysis of the Japanese in the US with a special emphasis on the Issei as the fountainhead for the Japanese experience.

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

ES 149 Japanese Americans and the Concentration Camps (4) Study of the evacuation and internment of over 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry in the US during World War II.

MONTEREY PENNINSULA COLLEGE

ES 186 Japanese-American Experience (3) Introduction to the experience of Japanese-American and to the social, economic and political structure of the present Japanese-American communities.

SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

AAS 400 Introduction to the Japanese American Community (3) Traditional social, economic, political institutions as well as grass-root organizations in the Japanese community

AAS 410 Concentration Camps USA (3) The factual experience, the legal justification, the causes and consequences of those who were victims of the wartime measure of detention and internment of 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry.

AAS 420 Japanese American Sociological Profile (3) The social patterns of the Japanese Americans--family & kinship, deviancy & social control, socialization methods, acculturation and assimilation.

AAS 425 Japanese American Personality (3) Interdisciplinary study of the Japanese American character, identity, self-image and behavioral interaction of Japanese & American cultural values.

AAS 455 Japanese Americans in the United States (3) The immigration and subsequent political, social & economic events affecting the adaptation of Japanese Americans in the US.

AAS 460 Japanese Americans in Hawaii (3) Historical, political and social survey of the Japanese Americans in Hawaii.

AAS 468 Creative Expression of Japanese Americans (3) Delve into historical and contemporary writings in order to understand the variety of experiences and the creativity in expressing Japanese America.

AAS 480 Seminar on Japanese American Community (3) Seminar on Japanese American community; extensive study of social, political, economic & educational factors of community.

AAS 485 United States-Japan Relations & the Japanese American (3) Interdisciplinary study of the historical & economic evolution of US-Japan relations; focus on continuing effects of US-Japan relations on Japanese Americans.

AAS 490 Selected Topics in Japanese American Studies (2-5) Seminar in a selected topic or theme. May be repeated for credit as topics vary: Literature & Japanese Americans; Concentration Camps II; Japanese American Women; Japanese American Community Press; Japanese American Art; Media in the Japanese American Community; Contemporary Issues in the Japanese American Community; Religion and Japanese Americans; Japanese Americans & Education; Redevelopment & Urban Renewal; Sansei Male/Female Relationships, Japanese American Social Change.

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

AAS 115 America's Concentration Camps (3) A study of the effects of Pearl Harbor on Japanese & Japanese Americans on the West Coast.

AAS 192 History of Japanese Americans (3) A study of the Japanese in America from approximately 1800.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY

AAS 122 Japanese American History (5) Proseminar with selected topics on the study of Japanese American history.

AAS 14 A-B-C Community Japanese (5) Emphasis on the development of conversational skills to be utilized in Japanese American communities. Includes discussion in Japanese of historical, social & cultural aspects of the Japanese American community and life.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

EDUC 363 Japanese Culture in the United States (3) Socio-economic, political & legal development of Japanese from earliest signs of immigration to the present.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ES 311 The Japanese American: Heritage, Contributions & Problems The Japanese American experience in the United States; historical, social & cultural perspectives of the Issei, Nisei, Sansei.

WASHINGTON:

FORT STEILACOOM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HIST 183 Japanese Americans Japanese American historical, sociological character, subculture & contributions to America.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

AAS 370 Japanese American History & Culture Historical roots & subsequent changes in the Japanese American group are examined through an interdisciplinary approach.

HAWAII:

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, MANOA

ES 200 Japanese in Hawaii